

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application with claims 1, 7-9 and 15 being amended and claim 6 being cancelled. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 6 and claims 7-9 and 15 have been amended to depend from claim 1 as opposed to now cancelled claim 6. Claims 16 and 17 have been amended similarly to claim 1.

Rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 15-17 under 35 § 102(b)

Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 15-17 are rejected under 35 § 102(b) as being anticipated by Abecassis.

The present claimed invention recites a method and apparatus for selectively controlling access to programs. In order to control access, a rating limit corresponding to a first user input and an exception to the rating limit corresponding to a second user input are set. Information for identifying a program and for specifying a rating of said program is received and compared with the stored rating limit. It is then determined whether an exception to the rating limit has been set for the program identified by the received program identifying information. Access to the program is controlled in response to the results of the steps of comparing and determining. The exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to the set rating limits.

Abecassis discloses a video on demand system. In this system, a user is able to selectively view a video. The viewing of this video is subject to preset content preferences for the user. Abecassis neither discloses nor suggests that "exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits" as in the present claimed invention. In fact, as Abecassis is a video on demand system, there is no need to provide exemptions from the rating limits as programs provided for viewing are specifically selected by the user prior to viewing. The Examiner contends that Abecassis discloses the above discussed exemptions from

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the rating limits in column 16, lines 4-16 and in Figure 4 A. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Figure 4 A illustrates a viewer's content preferences selection screen.

Through this screen, the user is able to establish a level of explicitness in different categories for viewing. This passage neither discloses nor suggests that "exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits" as in the present claimed invention. Abecassis is not concerned with setting exceptions to the ratings limits. In fact, this figure and its corresponding description disclose setting the ratings limits, not setting exemptions from the ratings limits which act independently from the set ratings limits to block or enable viewing of a program as in the present claimed invention.

In view of the above remarks and amendments to the claims it is respectfully submitted that the present invention is not anticipated by Abecassis. It is thus further respectfully submitted that this rejection is satisfied and should be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 4 and 16 under 35 § 103(a)

Claims 4 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abecassis in view of Aras et al.

Similarly to Abecassis, Aras et al. neither disclose nor suggest that "exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits" as in the present claimed invention. Aras et al. are concerned with monitoring audio visual materials presented to a subscriber. This system is used to collect and process information on subscriber behavior based upon the viewing habits of the subscriber. Aras et al. is not concerned with controlling user access to programs as in the present claimed invention. Aras et al. is only concerned with monitoring the viewing habits of a user. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Aras et al. adds nothing when taken alone or in combination with Abecassis that would make the present claimed invention unpatentable. It is thus further respectfully submitted that this rejection is satisfied and should be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 9-14 under 35 § 103(a)

Claims 9-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abecassis in view of Wood et al.

Similarly to Abecassis, Wood et al. neither disclose nor suggest that “exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits” as in the present claimed invention. Wood et al. is not concerned with ratings limits as in the present claimed invention. Wood et al. discloses a video data recorder having integrated channel guides. A user is able to control recording and storage of television signals into personal channels for later playback and viewing. The processor monitors for programs meeting user selectable criteria. If a program or programs are determined to meet the criteria, the highest priority show may be recorded. The processor may also be set to record particular programs. Woods et al. sets preferred criteria which are used to determine if a program should be recorded. This is the opposite of the present claimed invention which sets ratings limits which are used to block programs and provides for exceptions to the ratings limits. Furthermore, unlike the present claimed invention, Wood et al. does not provide for setting exceptions to ratings limits which operate independently of the ratings limits.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Woods et al. adds nothing when taken alone or in combination with Abecassis that would make the present claimed invention unpatentable. It is thus further respectfully submitted that this rejection is satisfied and should be withdrawn.

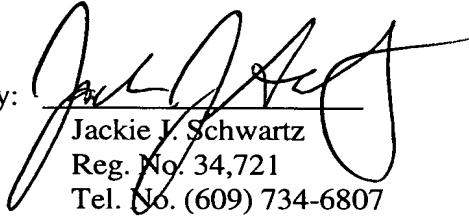
Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejections, it is believed that, in view of the preceding amendments and remarks, this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly then, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at the phone number below, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled.

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No fee is believed due. However, if a fee is due, please charge the additional fee to Deposit Account 50-2828.

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